1:Alkema & Bezemer--341 E-4, 5 (no date)1927 OB1 Indonesia OB1
Ambon OH4
Halmahera OH12

[301] Chapter 6. The Significance of the Christian Religion for the Indonesians

Among the millions of the native population only a very small percentage profess the Christian religion. Altogether it is less than a million, that is, about two per cent of the population. The number is constantly increasing, however, and in evaluating the percentage of Christians in relation to the population as a whole it must be borne in mind that the missions which bring Christianity to the non-Christians are scarcely a century old and only in the last half-century have they been working with any intensity.

It is not our purpose here to describe the missions and their work as such. What we wish to do is to give some account of what it means to an Indonesian to accept the Christian religion, in his spiritual life as well as in his social and economic life.

In the same way as we dealt with the Hindu religion and Islam, we shall preface the discussion with a short historical account of the propagation of Christianity in the archipelago and at the same time point out the different methods that have been used in going about this task in former and more recent times.

The first Europeans to come in contact with the Netherlands East Indies were the Portuguese. True to the customs of their time, they combined the establishment of trade relations with the propagation of Christianity among the peoples with whom they came in contact. On their journeys their ships carried members of one or another of the religious orders, and these monks, supported by armed strength, then preached Christianity among the inhabitants of the settlements that their fellow-countrymen founded.

Vasco da Gama took two Trinitarian monks with him on his first journey to the Indies; one of them died on the way, and the other began to preach. On his second journey he took two new missionaries with him, and priests were also sent to the archipelago, [302] where they began to spread knowledge of Christianity. In 1536 they introduced it to Ambon. In 1534-1536 they attempted to do the same on Halmahera, but with

1:Alkema & Bezemer--342 E-4, 5 (no date)1927 OB1 Indonesia OB1
Amben OH4
Halmahera OH12
Makassar OG6

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[302 cont.]
lasting success (1).

1. B.J.J. Visser, Onder Portugeesche vlag, de katholieke Missie van Indonesië (1511-1605), pp. 9 ff.

The two methods the Portuguese used, as we have already mentioned, were preaching and the use of force.

The man who did most to spread the Christian religion during the time the Portuguese were in control of the Moluccas was the Jesuit, Francis Xavier. After having been in various other places, especially Goa, he arrived in Malacca in 1545. There he set himself the task of learning the Malayan language. Three months later he thought he knew enough and set out for the Moluccas, where in Hitoe on the island of Ambon, in Ternate, and in Moro (Halmahera) he preached with great success. The method he used is not known, but in all probability it was the same as the one he used in Goa. With a bell in his hand he went through the streets and collected a crowd of people, whom he then invited to become Christians. He tried as best he could to express the Ten Commandments, the Creed, with an exposition of the articles of faith, the general confession of sin, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria in the Malayan tongue and so moved the people that they allowed themselves to be baptized (2).

2. Ibid., p. 41.

He did not stay very long in the Indies. In 1549 he left the Moluccas and, arriving in Malacca, found a number of priests there whom he set to work in the field he had just left.

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Around 1540 the Portuguese brought Christianity to Celebes where two Makassarese princes, who had been baptized on Ternate, wished to persuade their relatives to follow their example. In 1588 the Prince of Batjan was converted to Christianity.

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631 East, which I prefer to call now Kleine Oost),[1]
a resident plus an assistant resident and
probably a controleur or two. Saparua had an
assistant resident and at least one controleur.
Haruku had a controleur. At present, the as-
sistant resident has become secretary to the
kepala daerah. There is also a controleur or
rather two of them (de Swaart and Gaspersz).
The kepala daerah (Pulapessie) is now the as-
sistant resident, but he is the last one and
there will be no more. Saparua has a controleur.
A Haruku has none now. In the old days, until
● [175] about 1830, Saparua was the capital of all the
Ambon islands.

C Ceram: I hear much about the great poten-
133 tialities of Ceram for the population of Ambon.
There are overpopulated areas in Saparua and
Haruku. But I doubt whether Ceram is so good
as they say. It is too hilly and there are no
big valleys. There is a rather large plain
around Wahai and a smaller one behind Teluti
Bay. However most of the island is all up and
down. It may be a smaller Java, but the hills
and rougher terrain come in too close.

C There are four government divisions in Ceram,
631 with HPB at Geser Island, Wahai, Amahei, and
554 Piru. These division heads are natives, and I
635 think all from Ambon. Perhaps the Geser one is
292 not. No one can have the title "controleur"
except someone who has a diploma in Indology
from Holland. Gaspersz has the title by cour-
tesy. Natives of controleur rank are called
Bestuursassistent or, a new title, Bestuurs-
hoofd. They have fewer stripes on their uni-
C forms than the real controleurs.

651 Pieter told us that there is a kampong in
789 East Ceram, Bati or Pati, where the people are
825 able to turn into kalong (flying foxes). When
the tax collector comes he sees only these

[1] [i.e., Little East -- Analyst]

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304 is done for greater beauty. They were surprised
178 when I said it was surely an old custom on the way out!

They remember that there was tattooing here long ago.

411 The shields here were very narrow, and the
[535] tjakalele ones are narrow now. They are only about eight centimeters wide. Thus they are really parrying shields, and a sign that no bows were used here perhaps.

292 The fellow from Saparua cannot remember any-
178 one making uti-uti sarongs there, but he says
439 they use them on adat occasions sometimes. These they buy from Timor. Thus they have forgotten that they too once had them. However, the "adat" remark is a giveaway.

417 Sasi signs are made on leaves, cocoanut,
421 pineapple, etc. They are strung on a frame.[1]

624 The position of kepala dati is hereditary.
423 He must be the oldest son of the former kepala
614 dati. In Paperu the tuan tanah, who is old,
[197] still speaks the bahasa tanah, but his son and successor does not learn it.

567 The name for slaves in bahasa tanah here is ata.

624 The Saparua man says that the term bangsa
565 hatsil was used in Saparua for regents who got
114 a bit more pay than the regular radjas. They were not of lower rank. He says they still choose the kepala kewang from a certain bangsa, that is, from a certain lineage. This is not so in Tulehu.[2] It shows that the author of the ENI article must have been writing about Saparua. But as usual, the fool doesn't say that his remarks are for Saparua. Perhaps, of course, this was true of Ambon too at one time.

565 In the negri of Saparua there are still bur-
624 gers. They are under the wijkmeester who is
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425 [1 See D.D. Tauern, Patasiwa und Patalima, Leipzig,
726 1918, pp. 100-01--Analyst]; [2 See bibliography, cat. 113--Analyst]

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624 like a kepala soa. He is under the radja.
175 Neither of these men knows about the separate
425 Ambon kampongs, but they do know of one in
726 Saparua which is indeed separate in a way although it is under the radja of a negri. It was settled by people of various negri who got the land from the Dutch as a reward for betraying a negri on a hilltop which would not submit. The Dutch could not get up as the folk there kept throwing spears and stuff down on them. The betrayers led them up secret paths. The remnants fled to Ceram, and their land was given to the traitors.

583 The Mohammedans can marry, unless it is a
851 case of tulung dati, only if the bride price is paid.

The Saparua man says that it is quite common for Christians to marry before the price is paid. If the price is never paid, one child must be given to the woman's family. This is known as anak harta. If the price is paid later on, all the children are considered as the father's, even ones born before the price was paid. With tulung dati the bride price is not paid by the Christians either, and the children are the mother's.

771 The Saparua man says that Mohammedanism works
182 with adat, and this is why adat is kept better
578 in Mohammedan negri. Christianity runs against adat and thus these negri lose out in terms of the old customs. He thinks, and I hear this so much, that the Christian church should work with adat too. It should keep the good things of the past. He says there is much friction with the zealots of the church. If I had the time I would like to get cases of this. I have one from Ambon, above.

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142 Naku: I left Ambon on Monday, November 28,
501 [i.e., wiskmeester & radja of a negri in Saparua --Analyst]